

Hago's Little Puppet

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Summary: Hago hypnotises King Mufasa, and influences several decisions in the pride to make himself King. Can Simba and Nala see through this and save the day?

***Chapter 1*: Chapter 1: Hypnotic Powers**

AN: I can't believe there's only three more stories left until the end of the series. Still, you'll be happy to receive this new story – a little early, I might add – won't you?

Hago's Little Puppet

Chapter One: Hypnotic Powers

"This isn't fair!" Hago exclaimed as he slammed his paw down on the rocky ground of the Outlands as hard as he could.

"Did that help?" his brother, Bora, asked.

"Yes."

"Did that hurt?"

"Yes," Hago replied as he winced in pain. Why did the ground have to be so stubborn? All parts of the Earth should obey him!

"What are you moaning about this time?" Bora enquired, noticing his younger brother had become noticeably more miserable over the course of the few days. He figured it was something to do with his constant failures.

His only goal now was to take over the Pride Lands, and he was so obsessed with it that nothing else at all mattered to him. Even if he had to wait a hundred years, the Pride Lands were going to be in his control!

"You know what I'm moaning about!" Hago snapped angrily, pressing his head into the ground miserably. "Why aren't the Pride Lands mine?"

"Because they don't belong to you?" Bora suggested. "The King and Queen are the rightful rulers, you know."

Hago glared at his older brother, his eyes burning with anger. "They are rightfully *mine*!" he declared, poking the top of his magical staff into Bora's chest. "After all the years of suffering I've been through I deserve a reward! All I want is the Pride Lands! Is it too much to ask for?"

"Yes," answered Bora simply. "It's the most respected pride in all the land. The whole world, even. It's a *lot* to ask for."

Hago scowled and turned away from Bora, talking to himself. "If only there was a foolproof way of doing it. I've tried threats, kidnapping, making deals with bratty little cubs with a crush. Is there anything else I can do to secure that majestic kingdom?"

"From the way I'm standing, it doesn't look like it," Bora replied as he joined Hago by his side. "We're pretty much doomed, Hago. We might as well forget about this silly 'take over the Pride Lands' idea and retire to an island paradise where we can live out the rest of our lives in peace."

"There's no better place to retire to than the Pride Lands, you idiot!" Hago told him. "That's why I want it so badly! Think of all the power and control you would have! All that space, all the creatures! An entire supply of water! It could all be ours!"

"Well, unless you have any more impressive tricks in that staff it doesn't look like we can do anything," Bora pointed out, gesturing to Hago's staff.

Hago stroked his chin with his paw thoughtfully, fiddling with his staff with his other paw. He spun it round so the eyes of the staff's cobra head were pointing directly at Bora's eyes.

"There has to be something," Hago said to himself as he thought hard to think of a clever, sinister plan. "I need that power. I need that control..."

Unbeknownst to Hago, the eyes of the cobra head on his staff were glowing an ominous red.

Bora wasn't listening to his brother. He was focusing on the eyes on the staff, and the eyes only. Bora didn't know why, but he just couldn't take his eyes off of them. They were so... entrancing.

He couldn't move. He just stood there staring into the sinister, glowing red eyes, completely mesmerised by them. He could feel himself losing control of his body, his thoughts. Everything was just slipping away...

Bora blinked, and then his eyes were glowing a frightening red. He had a blank expression on his face, like he was in some kind of trance. A *hypnotic* trance.

Hago turned to his brother. "What do you think, Bora? Don't you have any ideas in that brain of yours?"

Bora didn't reply. He continued to have the entranced expression on his face, staring blankly at his brother.

"Bora?" He waved a paw in front of Bora's face, hoping to get some kind of answer from him. He didn't. "Have you gone brain-dead? It wouldn't surprise me."

It only took a few seconds for Hago to realise that there was something different about his older sibling. Mainly, the glowing red eyes. This led to Hago to suspect his very own staff, and he put it up to his face, examining it carefully.

The eyes of the staff's cobra head were glowing an evil red. Hago could practically feel the evil from the staff burning into his soul. The glowing eyes on his staff could only mean one thing: that his staff was doing something magical, and Hago had a sneaky suspicion as to what that might be.

Looking back at Bora, and then at his staff again, Hago concluded that Bora had been put into some kind of hypnotic trance because of his staff, which Hago had accidentally pointed towards Bora earlier while he was thinking to himself.

The eyes of the staff continued to glow red as Hago stared into them. Of course, it had no effect on him, because he was the owner of the staff, and Hago's own magic would never work against him.

Hago looked at his hypnotised brother, and started chuckling. The chuckling soon developed into loud, maniacal laughter that echoed through the Outlands.

"Oh, Hago, you dirty genius," Hago told himself, smiling evilly as another plan began to form in his head. "I didn't know this staff came with a hypnosis feature. Looks like the control I always wanted was here all along."

Hago decided to find out the extent of the hypnotic powers he had unknowingly used on his brother. "Bora, are you completely under my control?"

"I am in your power, master," Bora replied in a sleepy, hypnotic voice.

Hago chuckled at Bora's reply. "Ooh... 'master'. I like that. Now Bora, I want you to... roll over."

Bora did as he was commanded, and rolled over on the ground. Hago found this most amusing, and laughed out loud.

"He's completely under my control!" Hago exclaimed, the power immediately rushing to his head. "If I can control my brother, then think of who else I can control!" A cruel smile spread across Hago's face. "This is going to be quite an entertaining day. *Most* entertaining indeed."

Chapter 2: Chapter 2: Swept Away

Chapter Two: Swept Away

"Why do I get the feeling that this was a bad idea?" Simba asked Nala as the strong current of the river they were in quickly swept them downwards.

"Oh, *now* you say it!" Nala exclaimed. "Mister Don't-Worry-It'll-Be-Really-Fun!"

"How was I supposed to know there was a current?" Simba asked in defence. "We've never swum in this river before."

"Exactly!" replied Nala. "Why didn't we just stay by the water hole?"

"Well, you can't say it isn't exciting," Simba told her. "I mean, in a scary way."

Nala turned her head to see what awaited them at the end of the river, and once she saw what was at the end, she turned back to Simba, an unsurprised look on her face. "Uh-oh."

Simba had the same expression as she did. "Don't tell me. We're about to go over a huge waterfall."

"Yep."

"Sharp rocks at the bottom?"

"Most likely."

"Bring it on."

"Okay," said Simba as he and Nala walked away from the river they had just barely managed to escape. "Let's agree to *never* do that again."

"Yeah. If you didn't manage to swing from that branch sticking out of the water hole then I don't know what would have happened to us," Nala told him, feeling lucky that she hadn't been killed.

"We've had worse," Simba recalled, shivering slightly at the memories of the other day. "That chase with those hyenas the other day was *really* scary."

Nala shuddered. That had almost been the death of them. Why was it over the past few weeks everything seemed to want to kill the two of them? What did they do wrong?

"Don't remind me," she said. "I thought I was gonna *die*."

"Aw, you weren't gonna die," Simba assured her. "I wouldn't let them hurt you." He puffed his chest out, and spoke in a strong voice. "Simba – the mighty King!"

Nala giggled. He tried so hard to look tough and strong, but it just made him look all the more adorable! She liked Simba just the way he was – she wouldn't have him any other way. His personality was what made him unique. He stood out from everyone else.

"You know, Simba, you don't have to act tough to impress me," Nala informed him, playfully pushing his chest back into its original position. "I like you just the way you are."

Simba laughed bashfully, blushing behind his fur. "Aw, thanks, Nala." He looked into her eyes, and couldn't help it when he felt his insides begin to melt again. What was it about her that he loved so much?

She was smart, pretty and a whole lot of fun. That was putting it in a simple way. Simba would just *love* to tell her how he felt, and he had a feeling that she was going to find out sooner or later. Simba felt like he was fighting a losing battle – that is, he found himself wanting to reveal his secret to Nala more and more over the past few days.

He couldn't hold it in for much longer. Simba felt like he'd been hiding his feelings for *too* long now. If he refused to tell her, then what was the point? Was he just going to remain this way for the rest of his life, feeling lonely as he watched Nala grow up from the sidelines?

No. He didn't want that. Nala deserved better. He'd be everything she ever wanted. He was sure of it.

But for a relationship between them to work, Nala had to like him in the same way back. He wasn't exactly sure that she did. It felt like she was always rejecting him, telling Simba that she thought of him as just her friend.

He tried his best every day to impress her, but it never worked. Like Nala said – she liked him just the way he was.

Was that the answer? To just act natural around her? Was that what she wanted? Did that mean she liked him? Did she know how Simba felt about her?

The amount of questions that ran through Simba's head on a daily basis annoyed him greatly. There were no answers to any of these questions. Not unless he found the courage and strength to tell Nala that he had a crush on her.

But for Simba, it felt like it would never happen. There was too much fear involved, and it took all the courage out of him. And normally he was always so brave... What was wrong with him?

"Where do you want to go next?" Nala asked him, her sea green eyes sparkling with adventure. No matter how scary things got, Simba's best friend was always ready to move on to the next journey. Another thing he adored about her.

"Well, I was thinking we could—"

"Simba, what are you doing around here?" a deep, booming voice interrupted.

Simba turned around slowly, and found himself staring up at his father, the great King Mufasa. Simba could tell by his father's tone that he wasn't too pleased to find him and Nala around here.

Simba grinned innocently. "Uh... nothing," he lied.

Mufasa glanced over at the river in the distance, which was well known for being one of the most dangerous rivers in the Pride Lands. Many a lion had been swept away by its strong current, meeting a painful demise at the bottom of the waterfall.

Mufasa frowned when he saw that they were both wet, telling him that they had obviously decided to go for a little 'swim' in the river.

"Simba, were you swimming in that river?" Mufasa asked, knowing already that Simba had been in the river. He just wanted to know if his son was going to lie to him or not.

"No," he lied again, still grinning.

"Oh, really?" Mufasa retorted, looking Simba's body over. "Then why are you wet?"

Simba looked down at his chest, saw that he was visibly soaked, and quickly shook himself dry. "No, I'm not."

"Simba, what have I told you about lying?" Mufasa asked his son sternly.

Simba's ears dropped down and he frowned, looking down at the ground. "That it's the wrong thing to do and will only make things worse," he replied, repeating one of his father's 'life lessons'.

"This river is dangerous, Simba," Mufasa explained. "You could have been killed. You should feel very lucky to be alive."

Simba sighed, having learnt his lesson. "I'm sorry, Dad."

Mufasa smiled. "Good. Now you two try to stay out of trouble, and don't let me catch you around here again."

Mufasa walked away, proudly, like he always did. The perfect King.

Simba nodded at Nala, and they both walked away in the opposite direction. They passed a tree on their way, but didn't notice the lion who was hiding behind it.

Hago poked his head out from behind the tree, an evil smile on his face. He ignored Simba and Nala – for once – and focused his attention on Mufasa.

"Enjoy your freedom while you can, King Mufasa," Hago said in a sinister tone, "because you won't have any for a *long* time to come."

AN: You can all see where this is going, can't you? And you'll come back tomorrow, won't you? No? Fine, then I'll just

have to hypnotise you. You are feeling *very* sleepy...

Chapter 3: Chapter 3: Hypnotised

AN: Thirsty for more? Well, allow me to quench that thirst with some more chapters! Also, credit to WriterMonkey0626 for detecting the quote from *The Emperor's New Groove*. In my opinion that was quite an underrated Disney movie. Sort of like *The Rescuers Down Under*. Anyway, enough of my ranting, on with the story!

Chapter Three: Hypnotised

Hago slowly followed King Mufasa as he carefully patrolled the Pride Lands. The King was excellent at detecting any intruders, so Hago had to be as quiet as he possibly could, which was easier said than done.

Everything he did made some kind of noise. To Hago, breathing and walking were the noisiest things in the world right now. He even thought he heard himself blinking a couple of times, but maybe that was just his mind thinking silly things. The mind does that when you're nervous.

Hago just had to get in front of the King without him noticing. How was he going to do this? If the King caught even the slightest glimpse of him then he was done for. This was one of the trickiest things he'd ever had to do.

Hago wasn't an expert on stealth, and that was something anyone would pick up on. He was almost constantly angry, and was always shouting at everyone and everything in plain sight. Staying quiet was practically impossible for him.

But Hago knew he would have to if he stood any chance of achieving his goal. The ultimate goal that he had strived for almost all his life. The kingdom would be his if his plan was executed in the correct way.

Hago heard quite a loud snapping sound, and looked down to see that he had snapped a lone twig on the ground.

Quickly looking up, he saw Mufasa turn his head in Hago's direction. Everything seemed to go in slow motion for Hago then. He quickly ducked behind a nearby dead tree, preventing Mufasa from seeing him, but only just.

Hago stared at the tree, and then at the ground. That twig he stepped on had obviously fallen from this decaying tree.

Stupid tree, he thought, hating the tree instantly. *How dare it try to reveal my position to the King. I'll make a mental note to burn it to the ground when I take over the Pride Lands.*

Hago peeked his head out from behind the tree, and saw Mufasa was getting further away from him. Luckily for Hago, the King hadn't noticed him.

Hago breathed a deep sigh of relief. *Well, that was lucky. If I was still there one second later he would have spotted me.*

Hago continued to follow Mufasa, walking away from the tree he was hiding behind – the tree he now despised for almost blowing his cover.

Hago quickened his pace a little, lightly running through the field he was in. He could see himself getting closer and closer to Mufasa. The King still hadn't seen Hago, meaning that Hago had a good opportunity to jump in front of Mufasa and confront him. Well, Hago of course wouldn't jump in front of him, because he couldn't. His crooked back affected his agility significantly, and the pain seemed to worsen with each passing day.

Now's my chance, Hago thought as he got closer and closer. *The King – well, the former King, soon enough – is mine!*

Mufasa thought he heard someone approaching him from behind, and turned around to see...

Nothing. Just the grass that was swaying lightly in the breeze. Nobody was there. Nobody was following him. Nobody.

He assumed he was just hearing things, which was odd, because normally Mufasa could pick up an intruder from quite a far distance away. His hearing was always perfect. Most people often thought that *everything* about him was perfect.

Dismaying the idea that somebody was following him, Mufasa turned his head back to its original position, and found himself face-to-face with a lion holding a rather peculiar staff. His body was bent to the right slightly, telling Mufasa that there was something wrong with his back, and he was using the staff as some sort of walking aid.

The lion had an evil grin on his face. A *victorious* evil grin, like he had accomplished something. Something that Mufasa didn't know about yet.

The lion sighed at the sight of King Mufasa, like it was an honour to see him at last. "King Mufasa," he said after he

sighed. "I would say it's an honour to meet you, but it isn't."

"Who are you?" Mufasa demanded, already disliking this lion. There was an evil aura surrounding him, and Mufasa wasn't a fan of evil.

"Who am I?" said the lion, pointing to himself with the top of his odd staff. "You can call me Hago, but in about... ooh, a minute or so you'll address me as 'master'. I quite like it when people call me that. It makes me feel better than the commoners."

Mufasa narrowed his eyes in anger at Hago. Something in him reminded Mufasa of his brother, Scar, who had been secretly plotting and scheming to take over the kingdom for years. Scar had a heart filled with hate and anger, and Mufasa thought that Hago was just as evil as his brother was.

"You are not welcome here," Mufasa told Hago. "I want you out of the Pride Lands."

"Well, naturally you would say that," replied Hago. "Of course, I have ways of making you changing your mind. You'll find that I can be a very controlling person. Entrancing, even."

With that, Hago pointed the eyes of his cobra staff directly at Mufasa's, and chuckled evilly as the staff's eyes began to glow an entrancing red, and did its hypnotic work.

Mufasa's gaze was fixed firmly on the glowing red eyes of the staff. He couldn't look away, because he just didn't want to. Looking away was now forbidden to him. Nothing else mattered.

He didn't even care now that his thoughts felt like they were slipping away. He didn't care that he felt like he was losing control of his body.

An evil grin spread across Hago's face when he saw Mufasa blink, and his eyes began to glow red. The great King Mufasa was now completely under his control.

Hago laughed evilly, victorious. "Yes!" he exclaimed, staring at the hypnotised Mufasa. "At last, victory is mine! How does it feel now, Mufasa? How does it feel to not be in control for once?" He laughed maniacally again, feeling totally in control. He'd never felt like this before. He just felt so powerful having the King under his control. It felt good.

And now, he was going to exact his greatest plan yet. A sneaky, clever plan, which would ensure the Pride Lands were going to be his... *forever*.

Chapter 4: Chapter 4: Mother Knows Best

Chapter Four: Mother Knows Best

Simba didn't know why he had fallen asleep, and when he woke up and saw who was snuggled up next to him, he didn't really care.

He looked around. He was lying beside the water hole. The sun was burning down on him, making it a *really* hot day. Simba didn't mind – as far as he was concerned, anything was better than rain. It was quite a perfect Sunday afternoon.

Simba turned his head to the right, and saw Nala snuggled up to him, sleeping with a smile on her face. She didn't exactly seem to mind sleeping with him either. She was so adorable when she slept!

Sometimes Simba wondered if Nala actually liked him back. The way she looked right now, snuggled up to him like that, made her look like there was nowhere else she would rather be.

Maybe it was just how close they had gotten. They did things that normal friends wouldn't do together. It was something they were used to.

"Having fun with your girlfriend, Simba?" asked a voice from behind him.

Simba turned around to see his mother, Queen Sarabi. "Mom, she's not my girlfriend!" Simba insisted in defence.

Sarabi gestured to Nala, who was still snuggled up to him. "Are you sure about that?"

Simba looked at Nala, and then back at his mother. "This isn't what it looks like."

Sarabi laughed. "Simba, you're not covering this up very well."

"Covering what up?" Simba asked nervously, pretending that he didn't know what his mother meant.

"Simba, you have a crush on Nala, don't you?" Sarabi asked, knowing full well that her son adored every part of his best friend.

"What makes you think that?" replied Simba, trying to avoid telling Sarabi his secret. No one was supposed to know this!

"I can tell, Simba," Sarabi explained. "It seems pretty obvious to me."

Simba looked back at Nala, and sighed, realising it was pretty useless to deny things now. "Okay, so maybe I *do* have a crush on her."

Sarabi smile. "There. Now was that so hard to admit?"

"She doesn't like me back though," Simba continued, looking rather angry at that fact.

"She doesn't like you back?" his mother repeated. "Simba, she's snuggled right up to you. She couldn't be any more obvious. Why don't you just tell her?"

"Because... I'm scared," Simba admitted. "*Really* scared."

"There's nothing to be scared about, Simba," Sarabi assured him, prompting Simba to give her a questioning look.

"How do *you* know?" he asked.

Sarabi rolled her eyes at her son. "Because, Simba, I went through the very same thing at your age. I met your father when I was just a cub."

"And...?"

Simba's mother smiled as fond memories of her cubhood returned to her. "We were the *best* of friends," she continued. "And I *loved* him. I still do."

"How does this help me exactly?"

"Simba, you are exactly like your father was when he was your age. Well, he was a *little* bit less mischievous than you were, but you two were more or less the same. He must have had a crush on me for months, but I never really noticed. I

was too busy admiring how cute he was."

Simba couldn't help but laugh. So his parents were almost exactly the same as he was when they were younger? That was so coincidental it was funny.

"When did you tell him you liked him?" Simba asked curiously. Knowing his father, he probably did it in the most slickest, coolest way possible. His father knew no fear.

"I can remember it so clearly," replied Sarabi. She then laughed. "It was funny. He snuggled up to me while we were watching the sunset together. I noticed he was shaking. When he tried to tell me that he had a crush on me he was stuttering and choking. He was terrified! And then... when he told me, I felt like the most important lion in the world." She smiled. "We've been together ever since."

"So you're saying I should tell Nala?" Simba concluded when his mother had finished telling him her story.

"When you're ready," she replied. "Trust me, Simba. She likes you back, I can tell. Mother knows best," she said with a wink.

Simba grinned back at her, a little bit more confidence instilled within him. "Thanks, Mom."

Sarabi smiled back and turned away, but not before telling her son one last thing. "Don't let me catch you two kissing."

Simba blushed behind his fur, and Sarabi laughed as she walked away, hoping she had convinced Simba to open up to his best friend. He was the type of cub who could do with a good girlfriend...

"There're not many people who can say they've hypnotised King Mufasa," said Hago to himself as he looked over Mufasa, who was still under Hago's control. The King's glowing red eyes were a clear indication of that.

Just the mere thought of being in control of the King was exciting. Just think of the possibilities! All the things you could manipulate, all the things you could control!

Power was what Hago strived to earn, and power was what Hago had received. "Now Mufasa, I would like you to confirm that you are totally and utterly under my control."

"I am in your power, master," Mufasa confirmed in his deep, assertive voice. It was strange to hear something like that coming from someone like King Mufasa, but Hago found it more wonderful than odd.

"How about that?" exclaimed Hago. "The great and powerful King Mufasa called me 'master!'" He laughed maniacally. "Now *I'm* in control!" Hago looked at Mufasa, knowing exactly what he wanted him to do. "Mufasa, I want you to act naturally, and pretend that I'm your most trusted friend. There is no doubt in your mind that I'm the most trustworthy person you've ever known, and you will *not* believe anyone who says a bad word about me. Do you understand?"

Mufasa nodded obediently. "Yes, master."

Hago grinned sinisterly. "Excellent. Oh, and – before I forget – ditch those red eyes. You look too conspicuous with them."

Mufasa's eyes changed from red to their original reddish-brown colour. He looked more or less normal – something Hago wanted if his plan was going to work properly.

"To Pride Rock, Mufasa!" Hago ordered, pointing in the direction of Pride Rock. "I'd like to see my future pride."

"As you wish, master," Mufasa obeyed, walking proudly, like he usually did. Aside from his sudden devotion to Hago, Mufasa looked completely normal. Nothing seemed to be different about him.

And that's why Hago thought his plan couldn't fail.

AN: The King hypnotised by a magical maniac? That can't be good. Looks like our two favourite cubs have their work cut out for them. I'm sure you're itching for more, but I'm afraid you'll simply have to wait until tomorrow. See ya next time!

Chapter 5: Chapter 5: A Sick Surprise

AN: I'm very pleased to hear that you like the story, and I'm sure you'll be very pleased to read the next two chapters.

Chapter Five: A Sick Surprise

Nala's eyes flickered open, and she was more than happy to find that she was still snuggled up with Simba. She smiled as she watched Simba sleep. His head rested lightly on the ground, and he had a little smile on his face which Nala found adorable.

She nuzzled his chest affectionately. His fur seemed so rough, but it always felt soft to her.

She just couldn't get him out of her mind, because he was so wonderful in so many ways!

I wish you liked me back, Simba, Nala thought as she observed him sleeping, pretending to be talking to him. *I'd make a great girlfriend, you know. We could do everything together, like we do now. I wish I could just tell you, but you'd never understand. You don't think of me like that.* She sighed sadly, as the realisation sunk in that she would never have a chance for Simba. *I'm just your friend. Your lonely friend.*

That was Nala's problem. While Simba seemed to gain more and more confidence to help him admit his feelings, Nala just kept getting more and more nervous about it. Everything seemed to be conspiring against her. If Simba just admitted it then it would make things a whole lot easier for her.

Nala saw Simba's eyes flicker open, and he immediately smiled at the sight of his best friend. That was another thing she loved about him. He was always happy to see her, no matter what.

"Comfy?" Simba asked, noticing how close Nala was to him. That was kind of odd, but Simba didn't think of it as something romantic. He just thought Nala wanted someone warm to hold on to – but that was kind of strange, considering it was an extremely hot day.

Nala smiled back at him. "Simba, you're the comfiest person to hold on to," she told him, meaning every word of it.

Simba couldn't help but blush. Whenever Nala gave him a compliment like that, it made his heart race.

He remembered what his mother had told him earlier: that he should just tell Nala how he felt about her, because chances were that she felt the same way about him. He did feel a lot more confident about it now, and a sudden thought crossed his mind.

This would be the perfect time to tell her, Simba thought to himself. *Just tell her, stupid! Tell her how you feel!*

"Nala, I—" Simba began before he cut himself off, fear gripping him tightly all of a sudden. So much for that bit of extra confidence.

"Yes, Simba?" asked Nala, thinking it was just going to be an ordinary question from him. If only she knew...

"Well, I just wanted to say that... I... Uh..." What was stopping him from saying it? Was it forbidden or something? There was always this mysterious force preventing him from expressing his true feelings for Nala to her. He just always felt so nervous and scared whenever he tried to tell her. Sometimes he wondered if it would *ever* happen. If he bottled this up for too long, then it would probably make him sick.

Nala giggled as she imagined Simba telling her that he had a crush on her, and had done for quite a long time. *That'd be just perfect,* she thought to herself.

"You seem so nervous, Simba," Nala told him. "What's wrong?"

"Uh... Well... Nothing." Simba sighed, finally admitting defeat for what felt like the tenth time. He got to his paws, sadness obviously evident on his face. He *hated* this!

Nala noticed the sad look on his face, and leapt to his side, a concerned look on his face. "Simba, there's obviously something bothering you. What is it?"

"It's nothing," Simba replied, staring at his reflection in the water hole. Simba noticed the sad expression on his face, and quickly changed it to an energetic one, not wanting Nala to get suspicious. "Where should we go next?"

He looks okay now, observed Nala as she studied Simba's face. She shrugged. *Oh, well. That's Simba for you.*

"Simba, we've explored just about everywhere in the kingdom!" Nala exclaimed. "Where could we go next?"

"The jungle?" Simba suggested enthusiastically. "You know, we never really got much of a good look around there. All because of that stupid lion with the stupid—"

Nala gasped when she noticed someone in the distance behind Simba. "No way!" she exclaimed, causing Simba to give her a curious look.

"What is it?" Simba asked.

Nala pointed behind Simba. He turned around to see one of the oddest things he had ever seen in his young life.

Hago was walking alongside Mufasa, and neither of them seemed to have any problems at all with this. They looked like friends, and the thought of that just seemed absolutely disgusting.

"Okay, I'm going crazy," Simba stated to himself. "It's official. This is all to do with the fact that I secretly love—"

"Just what are they *doing*?" Nala asked curiously, cocking her head to one side. "Your Dad is hanging around with Creepy Magic Guy."

"I know," Simba said as he scratched his head in confusion. "This isn't making any sense. Do you think we're going crazy?"

"I don't think so," Nala replied, narrowing her eyes to make sure that she was seeing things correctly. "Yep. It's definitely them, all right."

"I've gotta find out what's going on." With that, Simba headed over to Mufasa and Hago, who were still walking around as if there wasn't a care in the world. Was Mufasa not aware that he was walking with a creepy psycho?

Mufasa smiled at the sight of his son. "Simba, I was just looking for you."

"Dad, what are you doing with *him*?" Simba asked, pointing directly at Hago.

Mufasa glanced at Hago, before looking back at Simba. "Simba, this is my good friend, Hago."

Simba's mouth dropped open in horror at his father's reply. Hago? Good? Friend? No, no, he couldn't have heard it right. This was just crazy, this was insane! It was mad to think that Mufasa and Hago were friends! It was something that shouldn't happen at all! Not ever!

Hago smiled at Simba. "Nice to meet you again, Simba. Is something the matter?"

***Chapter 6*: Chapter 6: Under the Influence**

Chapter Six: Under the Influence

Simba glared at Hago with nothing but anger. He knew Hago was up to something, but he didn't exactly know what it was. Something was seriously wrong, and Simba knew it was up to him to figure it out.

"What are you doing here?" Simba asked Hago in an unwelcoming tone. If there was anyone Simba didn't want to see right now then it was Hago. He hated Hago almost as much as he hated his Uncle Scar. *Almost*.

"I'm here on the order of my best friend, King Mufasa," Hago replied, smiling innocently. He knew he would win this one. There was no one who could stop him, because his plan was completely foolproof. "He has quite an... *interesting* announcement to make at the end of the day, and had requested my presence."

"You're lying," Simba stated, seeing right through Hago's lies. He knew that his father would *never* be friends with such a cruel person. Hago was the type of person his father would see as an enemy.

"Simba, don't be so rude," Mufasa scolded. "Hago is a very respected friend of mine. He wouldn't lie."

"Huh?" Simba exclaimed. Was he hearing this correctly? Why was Mufasa standing up for Hago? What had Hago done to him? "Dad, you can't be serious! He's evil! He's one of the bad guys!"

"Mufasa, this is totally absurd," Hago told the King, trying as hard as he could to stop himself from laughing. He found the fact that Mufasa believed him instead of his son to be quite funny.

"You're right, Hago," Mufasa agreed, staring down at his son, feeling quite angry that Simba didn't believe his good friend, Hago. Mufasa would trust Hago with his life. He wasn't the type of person who would lie. "Simba, I think you owe Hago an apology."

Hago suppressed a snicker. "Yes, Simba. You've put quite a dent in my pride, I must say. But I'm willing to accept an apology from you."

Simba frowned. "You're not getting anything from me! I'd rather die!"

Nala rushed over to Simba's side, seeing all the commotion that was going on. "Simba, what's going on?" she asked, looking back and forth at Mufasa and Hago. Mufasa looked angry with Simba, while Hago looked quite offended. But Nala also detected a smidgen of enjoyment in the expression on Hago's face. It was like he found the whole situation rather entertaining. It wouldn't surprise her.

"He's done something to my Dad!" Simba exclaimed, pointing at Hago angrily.

Hago scoffed. "Simba, what could I possibly do to your Dad? This is getting absolutely ridiculous!"

"Simba, I want you to go," Mufasa commanded.

"Dad, he's—"

"Go!" Mufasa roared, causing Simba to jump back in surprise. He stared at Hago for a few seconds, before running off.

Nala was staring at Hago too. "What have you done?"

Hago grinned evilly, pure menace evident in his eyes. "Nothing," he replied. "What would make you think that?"

Nala stared into his menacing eyes, before she too ran away, following after Simba. There was something seriously wrong going on. Suddenly, Mufasa seemed to be good friends with Hago. That was one of the most unlikely things that could ever happen. It just sounded wrong.

Nala finally caught up with Simba in the middle of a grassy field. The sun stood high in the middle of the sky, telling her that it was the middle of the afternoon. It wouldn't be long now before the sun began to set, and evening begun, before that too would slowly dissolve into night.

"Simba, what are we gonna do?" she asked her best friend. "Why the heck is he friends with your Dad?"

Simba shook his head, a worried look on his face. "I don't know! I know he's done something to my Dad, I just don't know what!"

Nala could see he was starting to panic now. They couldn't start panicking. It would just make things worse. "Simba, calm down," she said soothingly, putting a comforting paw on his shoulder. "We need to think."

Simba nodded, taking a deep breath. He didn't like this. He'd was used to stopping Hago's various plots and schemes, but now his own family was at risk, and that made things quite different. It made things that little bit more dangerous.

"Okay," he said, breathing heavily. "Okay."

"We need to figure out what he's done to your Dad," Nala told him. "Then maybe we can, I don't know, make it right again."

Simba thought for a moment. "He knows magic, right?"

Nala nodded. "Yeah. So?"

"Well, what if he *made* my Dad his friend?" Simba suggested. "He could have... changed him, or..."

"Hypnotised him," Nala finished with wide eyes.

"Hypnotised him?" exclaimed Simba. "How could he do that?"

"With his magic, duh!" she replied, causing Simba to suddenly feel rather stupid.

"Oh, yeah. But why would he hypnotise my Dad?" Simba asked, wondering Hago what could gain from taking control of his father's mind.

Nala narrowed her eyes. Simba really missed out on the most obvious things sometimes. "Simba, your Dad is the King. Think of what Hago could do if he had control over him."

Simba gasped in horror. "He could have us banished!" Simba realised.

"Or he could take control of the whole kingdom!" Nala exclaimed, trying to get through to him.

"Oh, yeah. That too. Well, we've... we've gotta stop him!" Simba was beginning to panic again. Normally solutions quite easily presented themselves when he and Nala were in trouble, but this time there didn't seem to be an easy solution. Was there any way to stop Hago from taking over the Pride Lands?

"How are we gonna do that?" Nala asked, hoping he had some kind of a sneaky plan. Most times he did.

Simba thought for a moment, and his face lit up when a plan formed in his head. "We could always try telling my Mom. She'd be able to tell straight away if something was wrong with my Dad."

"Sounds like a plan," Nala said with a smile.

"We'd better hurry!" Simba then ran off, followed closely by Nala. They had to get to Pride Rock before Hago tried anything else.

"This is pure genius!" Hago exclaimed as he and Mufasa got closer and closer to Pride Rock. "I'm surprised I never thought of it before, really!" He turned to his obedient slave Mufasa, an evil grin on his face. "Mufasa, when we reach Pride Rock you're going to announce to the entire pride that you're going to make me the new King. You'll say that you have every confidence in me, and I'll make the perfect successor to you. You're going to say that I'll be *better* than you. In fact, that's quite a good reason for why you're stepping down actually. You'll say you think you've been a miserable failure as a King and are respectfully stepping down. Got it?"

"Yes, master," Mufasa complied. "You will be a far better King than I ever was."

"Oh, I know," Hago said with an evil chuckle. "I'm going to be the greatest King in *all of history*."

AN: Oh, boy, that Hago can sound very scary sometimes, can't he? How could this possibly end? There's only one way to find out...

Chapter 7: Chapter 7: From Bad to Worse

AN: Will Simba and Nala defeat Hago before he claims the kingdom for his own? All the answers are in this chapter!

Chapter Seven: From Bad to Worse

Sarabi was met by a peculiar sight when she exited the den at Pride Rock. She saw her loving mate, Mufasa, along with an odd lion with an odd staff. The perfect word to describe him. Odd.

Sarabi walked over to the two of them, a smile on her face. "Hi," she said to her mate, happy to see him.

Mufasa smiled back. "It's good to see you," he told her in a tone that sounded very robotic.

"And who's this?" she asked, gesturing to the strange lion with the staff.

Hago stepped in front of Mufasa, a welcoming smile on his face. "Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Hago, and I am a *dear* friend of your mate, King Mufasa."

Sarabi looked surprised. "Oh, really?" She laughed. "He's never mentioned you before."

Hago laughed back. "That's funny. No, that *is* funny!" Hago looked back at Mufasa. "You never told your own mate about me?"

Mufasa laughed along. "Must've slipped my mind," he joked.

The three of them began to laugh. "He is a *crazy* guy!" Hago exclaimed. After a few seconds passed, the laughter stopped and Hago sighed, still smiling.

"Why exactly are you here?" Sarabi asked curiously.

"Well, Mufasa has quite an important announcement to make, and he requested that I be present for it." He grinned. "I can't imagine why."

"Stop!" cried a voice from behind them all.

Hago, Mufasa and Sarabi all turned around to see Simba and Nala running over to them. Both had urgent looks on their faces, like they were desperate to stop something from happening.

"Simba, whatever's the matter?" Sarabi asked, noticing the urgent look on his son's face.

"Mom, he's done something to Dad!" Simba cried, pointing at Hago.

Hago rolled his eyes. "Not this again. I think we've had enough of you and your lies, you troublesome little cub."

Mufasa nodded in agreement. "I agree, Hago. It's about time you stopped playing games, Simba."

"Hold on a second," said Sarabi, looking down at her son. "If he has something to say then let him say it."

Simba grinned, knowing he had a chance here. He was lucky his mother always had a willingness to listen to him. Simba continued to point at Hago. "Mom, he's—"

Hago cleared his throat, interrupting Simba. "Yes, I'm sure you have something *very* important to say, but I'm sure it can wait for a few moments while you look at this."

Simba turned around slowly, a suspicious look on his face. "Look at what?"

Simba found himself staring into the glowing red eyes of Hago's cobra staff. Once he caught a glimpse of them, he couldn't stop looking. Simba stood on the spot, totally transfixed. His focus was now on those frighteningly red eyes. He could feel his thoughts slipping away, his control over his body, everything was just disappearing...

Simba blinked, and then his eyes started to glow an entranced red. He now had a blank expression on his face, which could only mean one thing:

He was under Hago's control.

Nala gasped in shock, a concerned look on her face. "Simba?" she called, trying to evoke some kind of response from him.

Hago laughed maniacally. It felt so rewarding for him to have control of the little cub who he considered to be his greatest enemy. "He's not going to listen to you now," Hago informed Nala. "Now he'll only listen to *me*."

Hago turned to Simba with an evil grin, eager to order him around. "Simba, go and murder your best friend. Now I'm killing two birds with one stone, how about that?"

"Yes, master," Simba obeyed in a hypnotic, sleepy voice.

"What have you done?" Sarabi asked, knowing that Hago was up to no good. She thought there was something odd about him...

"The same thing that I'm going to do to you in a minute," replied Hago. "In fact, I think I'll hypnotise the entire pride. That'll make them *very* obedient indeed."

"Simba...?" said Nala, scared, as Simba slowly approached her with an angry look on his face. Those glowing red eyes weren't exactly helping either. He looked like he wanted to *kill* her... But no, Simba wouldn't do that! Would he...?

"I'm going to kill you, Nala," Simba told her as he slowly approached her, his claws extended.

Well, that confirmed it. Simba was going to kill her, all right. Stupid Hago and his stupid hypnosis powers!

"Oh, come on, Simba, you don't want to kill me," Nala said nervously as she backed away from Simba slowly, trying to keep a safe distance away from him. "I'm your best friend!"

"I don't care what you are," Simba replied. "I only listen to my master, now."

Hago laughed at the sound of that. "I never believed I would hear that from my greatest enemy. This has to be the best day of my life!"

Sarabi frowned. Hago wasn't going to get away with this. "Not if I have anything to say about it." She got ready to lunge at Hago, her survival instincts taking over. If she had to rip him to shreds to protect the pride, then she would.

"Oh, you wouldn't want to do that," Hago warned her. "Not while I have your mate *and* your son under my control. I could kill the two of them instantly, you know. All I have to do is command them to kill themselves. You wouldn't want that, would you?"

Sarabi gasped in horror. "You wouldn't...?"

"Oh, I would," said Hago with a menacing sneer. He was in control of everything now. He knew it. No one could stop him. The Pride Lands were finally going to be his! All that trouble was worth it!

Simba – still under Hago's control – had Nala completely trapped on all sides. He had her backed right up against the edge of Pride Rock, leaving her with no space to get away.

"Simba, please!" Nala pleaded, fear and concern evident in her eyes. The fear was her not wanting to die, and the concern was for her best friend. She didn't want him to spend the rest of his life as a mindless servant to Hago. That creep... she wished he was dead! "You know you don't want to kill me!"

"I want to tear you to pieces," Simba said threateningly, wanting to scare Nala before he murdered her. He now obeyed only his master, Hago. Nala was of no importance to him, as far as he was concerned.

"You know that's not true!" Nala exclaimed, trying desperately to try and break the hold Hago had over Simba's mind. "Listen to me! Please!"

Nala tried to take a step backwards, but when she glanced behind she realised that if she had taken a step backwards, she would have fallen to her death. She was completely trapped on the edge of Pride Rock. If she went back then she would fall, and if she went forward then Simba would rip her apart. What was she going to do?

Nala took a risk, and tried to get around Simba. However, he grabbed her and violently threw her to the hard ground, causing her to cry out in shock.

"Simba, please—" Nala gasped in horror when she saw Simba raising his claws, ready to slash her in the throat. That was all Simba had to do – one quick slash at her throat and Nala would be dead.

Simba laughed evilly, something Nala would never in her life expect to hear from him. "Time to say goodbye, Nala!"

Nala had tears in her eyes now. Not because she was scared, but because she knew she wasn't going to ever see Simba again. "Simba, please don't..." she muttered, tears streaming down her face.

Simba got ready to slash Nala in the throat, when he saw the pleading look in her eyes. She looked so sad, so... heartbroken.

And that was when Simba realised that he couldn't do it. What was he thinking? He couldn't kill Nala!

Simba's eyes turned from an evil red to their original, friendly auburn colour, completely free from Hago's hypnotic control over him. "Uh... Hi," he said as he looked down at Nala, not really sure what to say.

Nala breathed a deep sigh of relief. "You're back!" she exclaimed, happy.

"Back from where?" Simba asked, looking around. "Where was I?"

Nala giggled. He was so funny! But then she realised that Hago was still in control of King Mufasa, and the two of them didn't have much time before Hago hypnotised the entire pride! "That doesn't matter now, Simba," she told him, getting to her paws and pointing at Hago, who looked rather shocked. "He's still controlling your Dad!"

"This isn't making much sense," Hago said as he scratched his head with the top of his staff, confused. "How are you free from my magnificent hypnotic hold?"

Simba and Nala walked down Pride Rock and stared at Hago, determined looks on both their faces. Together, they were quite an unstoppable force.

"We're stronger than you think," replied Nala, smiling.

Hago scowled. "Fine. Don't think it's much of a victory, because I still have control of the King!"

"Not for long," said a voice from behind Hago.

Hago turned around to see Sarabi, smiling as she stood in front of her enslaved mate. Hago thought that was rather peculiar – shouldn't she be cowering in fear right now?

"What are you doing?" Hago asked. What was she up to?

"You'll see," she replied. She looked over at Simba and Nala. "I used to do this a lot to him when I was a cub."

Sarabi then raised her paw and slapped Mufasa hard across the face, causing him to instantly snap out of Hago's control, his eyes turning back from red to their reddish-brown colour.

Mufasa put a paw to his burning cheek. "Ow," he said. "That really hurt."

"Oh, dear," said Hago, noticeably worried. "This has taken quite a sudden turn for the worse."

Mufasa suspiciously looked at Sarabi. He knew only one person who slapped him like that, ever since he was just a cub. "Did you slap me?"

Sarabi smiled in response. "Yes, I did, but only to free you from a lifetime of servitude to *him*."

Sarabi pointed at Hago, and Mufasa's eyes started to burn with anger at the sight of him. He remembered *exactly* what Hago had done to him earlier today. That evil fiend didn't deserve to even live!

Hago looked around, realised he was outnumbered, and tried to make a run for it. However, he didn't get very far when Mufasa blocked his path, letting out an angry roar.

Hago fell onto his back in surprise, looking up at King Mufasa. He didn't look very happy.

"I don't take very kindly to people who think they can enslave my kingdom," Mufasa told the dastardly villain. "The penalty is *death*."

Hago laughed. Not nervously, but evilly. "It's a good thing you won't be able to see me, then."

With that, Hago vanished out of sight. Mufasa looked around the area, confused, when he felt a sharp blow to his

stomach and he crumpled to the ground.

The sound of someone – presumably Hago – could be heard hobbling away as Simba, Nala and Sarabi hurried to Mufasa's side, helping him back onto his paws.

"Are you all right?" asked Sarabi, concerned.

"I'm fine," was Mufasa's reply. "I'm more concerned about that lion. How did he vanish like that?"

"He knows magic," Simba answered.

Mufasa shot his son a surprised look. "And how would you know such a thing, Simba?"

"We've met him before," Nala replied. "Actually, a *lot* of times. He's always trying to cause trouble for us. He kidnapped me, he tried to take over the kingdom while you were away – a lot of things, really."

"How long has this been going on for?" Mufasa asked, rather concerned for the pride's safety. If the Pride Lands were in danger, then he would have to ensure they were made safer.

Simba shrugged. "A few months."

"Why didn't you tell us sooner?" Sarabi asked, shocked that they had been keeping this a secret.

Simba and Nala gave Mufasa and Sarabi cheesy grins. "You never asked!"

"Man, you must like my fur if you're hanging on to it this much," Simba noticed as Nala rested her head on his chest again. "I always thought it was kind of rough."

The two of them lay in the middle of a grassy field, watching the billions of stars that were littered across the night sky. It really couldn't get much more beautiful than this.

"I think it's very soft," Nala told him, keeping her head on his chest.

"Yours is softer," Simba complimented.

She giggled. "Thank you, Simba."

They found themselves staring into each other's eyes again, his auburn eyes connecting with her teal ones.

Simba could feel his heart start to race, for what felt like the billionth time. He had a feeling it would continue to do that for a countless number of times to come.

He couldn't help but smile to himself as a thought crossed his mind. *I'm gonna tell her*, he confirmed, meaning every word of it this time. *Tomorrow. I'll tell her I have a crush on her.*

"Got something to say, Simba?" Nala asked, noticing the thoughtful look on his face.

"No," he replied, still smiling at her.

Not yet.

The End

AN: Did I tease you with that last scene? It's just a foreshadowing of the series finale, which I'm sure you'll be reading very soon, am I right?

NEXT TIME: Simba struggles to finally express his feelings for Nala to her, while a mighty invasion force gets ready to march...